



The E-Gobrecht

Liberty Seated
Collectors Club

2015 Volume 11, Issue 7

July 2015 (Whole # 126)

E-Gobrecht Wins ANA Award!

It is with great pleasure that I announce to the readers that the LSCC's electronic newsletter, *The E-Gobrecht*, received a prestigious ANA award. This is a club award for all the contributors to the *E-Gobrecht* who took the time and effort to support this newsletter during the past 10+ years including the monthly column writers, article authors, and even those who sent in a comment to the editor. This award is for all of you - **Congratulations!**

This information arrived in an email notification from Jerri C. Raitz, Senior Editor of THE NUMISMATIST Magazine on June 18th.

"Dear Bill:

It is with great pleasure that I inform you that "The E-Gobrecht" has been selected by a panel of judges to receive the first-place ANA Outstanding Club Publication Award in the "Electronics" category.

The Outstanding Club Publications Awards will be presented at the ANA's World's Fair of Money Convention, during the ANA District Representative meeting at 8 a.m. on Saturday, August 15. Please plan to be in Room 56 of the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center by 8 AM.

Congratulations! Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Regards,
Jerri C. Raitz, Senior Editor
THE NUMISMATIST Magazine
American Numismatic Association
818 North Cascade Avenue
Colorado Springs, CO 80903-3279
www.money.org"

Auction News by Jim Gray	2
LSCC Calendar	2
Regional News by Dennis Fortier	3, 7
The Curious Collector by Len Augsburg	4, 7
Quarter of the Month by Greg Johnson	5
The Strike Zone by Rich Hundertmark	6
LSCC Member in the Spotlight: Mark Verbeck By Tony Barreca	8-9
Gerry Fortin Rare Coins - The Daily Blog by Gerry Fortin	10
Previously Unknown and Complete BU Set of Liberty Seated Dollars Turns Up! by W. David Perkins	11
Of Fips, Bits, and Picayunes... Some coin terms of the 1840s and 1850s by Jim Laughlin	12- 13
The Mysterious Wooden Box from the 19th Century - Part I by Paul Kluth	15- 21
Free Advertisements	22
LSCC Information	23

The *E-Gobrecht* is an award winning informal electronic publication of the Liberty Seated Collectors Club (LSCC). The LSCC is a non-profit organization dedicated to the attributions of the Liberty Seated Coin series. The LSCC provides the information contained in this email newsletter from various sources free of charge as a general service to the membership and others with this numismatic interest. You do not have to be a LSCC member to benefit from this newsletter; subscription to the *E-Gobrecht* is available to anyone. All disclaimers are in effect as the completeness and/or accuracy of the information contained herein cannot be completely verified. Contact information is included on the last page.



Auction News

by Jim Gray, LSCC #664

The **Goldberg** Pre-Long Beach Auction contained an MS63 1838-O half dime that did not sell. Three nice Carson City half dollars were sold. An 1870-CC graded AU50 sold for \$25,850, an MS62 1873-CC No Arrows went for \$18,200, an AU53 1874-CC hit \$7,344.

The **Heritage** Sale Long Beach sale had a VG8 1846 half dime that sold for \$1,293. An MS63 1849-O dime sold for \$3,525 and a MS66 1866 piece hit \$3,760.

An 1842-O Small Date quarter in VG8 sold for \$940 and a VF20 1851-O hit \$881. Three 1867-S pieces graded VF25, XF45, and MS64 sold for \$1,410, \$3,525, and \$17,625.

AU58 and XF40 1842-O Small date half dollars hit \$12,925 and \$3,995. An XF45 1851 was worth \$1,765 and two 1852 coins sold for \$3,055 and \$3,760 in grades of AU58 and MS63. An 1852-O in MS61 sold for \$3,760. 1855-S, 1856-S, and 1857-S pieces in grades of VF30, AU55, and MS63 hammered for \$1,880, \$2,590, and \$9,988. An 1870-CC in VF25 hit \$6,463 and a VF35 1871-CC sold for \$2,115. An 1873 No Arrows Open 3 graded VF30 soared to \$7,638 and an 1873-CC No Arrows in XF45 hit \$1,880. An XF40 1874-CC went for \$3,760 and an AU55 1878-S was strong at \$82,250.

An 1854 dollar graded XF40 sold for \$5,053 and an 1872-CC AU50 sold for \$8,225.

LSCC Calendar

Early-July 2015. **Gobrecht Journal** Issue #123 printed and mailed with a copy of the Annual Club Treasury Benefit auction catalogue to all current members.

July 10, 2015. **9th Annual Summer FUN Show**, LSCC meeting, Orange County (FL) Convention Center, 9800 International Drive, Hall WA3, West Concourse. Jason Feldman will host the club meeting on Friday at 9 AM.

July 17, 2015. Whitman's Baltimore Summer Expo, Baltimore (MD) Convention Center, is scheduled for July 16-19. There will not be a club table at this July show; however, Len Augsburg will be hosting the club meeting as usual Friday at 9 AM in Room 301.

August 13, 2015. **ANA World's Fair of Money**, LSCC Annual Meeting and Club Benefit Auction, Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Rosemont, IL, Thursday at 9 AM in Room 5.

October 1, 2015. Deadline for submission of articles and advertisements for the Fall *Gobrecht Journal* Issue #124.



Regional News

by Dennis Fortier, LSCC #2016

Greetings after a busy June and LSCC events throughout the United States!

The June Long Beach Expo was much better than expected. Many said it would be a slow show but floor traffic was solid all three days and dealers reported good sales. Our club table saw strong interest from attendees as well. Bob Clark had a wide selection of Seated material on display and signed up a new member. It was a true pleasure spending time with him at the club table.

Brian Cushing hosted the traditional LSCC social event at the Rock bottom Brewery. It turned into a two-part evening. The first group (about a dozen of us in image at right) had dinner and drinks, then as most of us were leaving a second wave came in for drinks and socializing. Overall, it was an enjoyable evening with our West Coast members.

The Long Beach educational presentation drew only a small audience since many club members had not planned to attend the show on Saturday. Those that did attend the presentation (Overrated/Underrated Liberty Seated Coinage) were busy taking notes and absorbing the insight from club experts. Many thanks to Taryn, Keni, and Don Willis for making it all possible.

John Frost report in on his regional meeting efforts at the Cincinnati and Raleigh show:

"At the Cincinnati Numismatic Expo June 19-20, attendance was light in general. Our ta-

ble was in a great spot, just outside the bourse entrance next to the visitor registration area, and most people entering or leaving the show at least gave us a look. The educational sessions on Saturday were held in a room down the hall from the bourse floor. The few people that stopped by had a good time and

learned something. We did re-sign a former club member and handed out a few applications.

On June 26-27, we next attended the Raleigh Money Expo for the first time. This show was very well organized by the Raleigh Coin Club and the club bent over backward to make sure we had anything we needed. With excellent advertising, there was good traffic at the joint

LSCC-BCCS table both days of the show, despite broiling heat and humidity. A number of members stopped by our booth and commented how happy they were that the club had a presence at the show. We had some great discussions at the table, along with some Show & Tell (some members came back to the show Saturday with some neat coins to show us). The public very well received our exhibit. In addition, I gave two educational programs on Friday.

"Liberty Seated and Barber Counterfeits" followed by "Introduction to Liberty Seated and Barber Coinage" (image at top left) were both well attended. The programs were presented in a make-shift room created behind curtains in the corner of the bourse floor. With a portable microphone and speaker, it worked! Both the LSCC and BCCS picked up several new members at this show. LSCC member and NC resident Trey McGovern also assisted at the table on Saturday (image at left)



(Continued on page 7)



The Curious Collector

by Len Augsburg, LSCC #1271

Auction Cataloging for Dummies

As many of you are aware, I have been doing some freelance cataloging for Heritage over the last few months. My house has been overflowing with auction catalogs for years, but I never gave much thought to who wrote them, or how they were put together. Being directly involved in the process gives an appreciation for the process and a realization for how hard it is to get things right.

The first thing that struck me about Heritage was the massive scale of the operation. Heritage may sell 5,000 or more lots of U.S. coins in a single auction and when you multiply that by the whole year, you are looking at perhaps 50,000 auction lots. If you have done any part-time dealing on eBay, you know the overhead involved in with one just one lot – take a picture, write a description, upload everything to the auction site, deal with payment and shipping on the backend. And you also assume risk – if a buyer returns a coin or attempts to renegotiate the terms of sale, all that work can be for nothing. Now, multiply that headache by 50,000 and you start to get some idea of what is going on.

Remarkably, the auction catalogs are in some way the most tangible product of all this work. The coins move from buyer to seller (of course, the middleman gets a piece of the action), from safety deposit box to vault, but for many of us the coins are tucked away in a bank and we do not often see them. The catalogs, however, stay in our homes, breaking down bookshelves (even threatening the structural integrity of the house in some cases) and constantly reminding us of the last or upcoming mega-sale to end all sales.

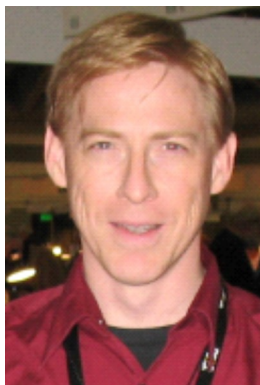
So, exactly how do these catalogs get written? The beginning of the answer, not surprisingly, is software. Heritage has a large investment in technology,

and there really is no other way to do it. I use a proprietary software tool that presents all the “meta” information about a particular lot – year, mintmark, denomination, grade, grading service, PCGS and NGC population data, images, etc. Somewhere within Heritage there must be a large team that deals with incoming consignments, enters all this information, and coordinates the photography. I haven’t met those guys yet but they make my job a lot easier!

At this point we have a blank slate and it is up to the cataloguer to describe the coin. There is no set formula, but you do have to hit on the basics – strike, luster, marks, toning, and eye appeal. You also don’t want to waste words – 300-page color catalogs are not cheap to print and distribute, and again you are multiplying by thousands of lots and thousands of bidders each year. So, if a coin is circulated, pointing out wear on the high points doesn’t add a lot of value. The opposite, however, is not true. Suppose you have an AU58 coin with minimal wear, one that could get into a MS61 holder on a good day? In this case, you definitely want to convey to the reader that this is an exceptional situation.

The overall goal with the text is to make it sound like it came from a single writer. This requires strict adherence to a style guide and every auction house has their own. There are tons of questions you never think of until you sit down and try it yourself. Is a coin Uncirculated or uncirculated? Proof or proof? Is it a ten-cent piece, or a ten cent piece? Is a coin well struck or well-struck? Were ten examples minted or 10 examples? [*Emphasis mine for clarity - Editor*] Do you put two spaces in between sentences or one? When can you use the words rare or scarce? Is it permissible to refer to a old-time collection as a cabinet? What are the rules for quoting data from the grading services? You could poke any long-time Heritage cataloguer in their sleep and they will immedi-

(Continued on page 7)



Quarter of the Month

by Greg Johnson, LSCC #1460

1876-CC Quarter with Reverse Cud

An interesting and uncommon variety of an otherwise common date and mintmark was recently brought to my attention. This month it is an 1876-CC quarter with a reverse cud so large that metal is missing from the obverse rim opposite the cud. The coin, shown in the figure below, was discovered by Jim Postin of GFRC-Coins (which is an eBay subsidiary of Gerry Fortin Rare Coins). It seems that there is always something of interest waiting to be found and right now the most fertile ground for Liberty Seated quarters appears to be the common, high mintage dates. Those high mintages apparently still conceal a number of errors, die states, and yet-to-be-discovered varieties. Happy Hunting!



Be on the look out for your personal copy of the 2015 Club Benefit Auction catalogue that will be postal mailed with *Gobrecht Journal* Issue #123 during the week of July 6th.



The Strike Zone

by Rich Hundertmark, LSCC #2347

The 1856-O Dime “Repunched Down,” Variety F-105

Modified fly fishing proverb of the month:

“Coin sense, as applied on the bourse, is what the old Zen masters would call enlightenment: simply the ability to see what's right there in the display case in front of you”
- Borrowed with appreciation from John Gierach

The 1856-O dime, with a mintage of 1,180,000, is fairly common for New Orleans Seated Liberty ten cent issues, however, adding to the hunt are two “top 100” varieties that command premiums and, better yet, can be easily identified by both novice and advanced collectors.

Last month, I was able to identify and acquire one of the Varieties, F-105. The variety is easily identified as both the 5 and 6 numerals in the date are boldly repunched above the digits with additional repunching also noted below the 1. The key diagnostic of the reverse is a “large O” with minor die residue lines between UNITED and the rim, but collectors need only to focus on the obverse date repunched to find the variety.

The rarity for the F-105 is estimated at R-4 on a R-1 (common) to R-8 (only 1 or 2 in existence, good luck with that !) scale. The R-4 rarity can be interpreted as an estimated 76-200 might exist in VF grade or better with the difficulty in locating described as “may or may not be available at larger shows.” So, while this

date is certainly not as difficult as hunting down a unicorn, it could take a bit of a hunt for specimens in grades AU and up.

The second variety, F-104, is basically the polar opposite of the F-105 with clear repunching below the 5 and 6 digits and directly above the rim. The variety has a R-3 rating, estimated between 201-500 and described as “tough date, limited examples at a large show.” As with the F-105, the reverse is a “large O” but without the die polishing, again, collectors only need to focus on the obverse repunched to find one.

As to pricing, both varieties have a basic two-time market premium over base price in VF with the F-104 commanding somewhat more.

Pictured below are the obverse and reverse images of the 1856-O Variety F-105 Dime with close-up of the repunching borrowed from Gerry Fortin's variety web book.

Happy hunting!



56 digits sharply repunched down



Regional News (Continued from page 3)

and is interested in helping expand the LSCC activity and membership in North Carolina. Overall, this is a show we want to do again.”

Next, Gerry Fortin reports on the Manchester, NH coin show:

“How often does an 1861 New Orleans Liberty Seated half dollar hoard come to market? Prior to the June NH Coin Expo in Manchester, LSCC President, Gerry Fortin, bought a 34-piece hoard from a New England collector along with a good number of *Gobrecht Journal* Issues #94 and #97 as part of the collection contents (image at right). He immediately called New Hampshire Coin Expo promoter Ernie Botte for an additional display case to help promote the hoard and the Liberty Seated Collectors



Club. The hoard made its debut at the show much to the delight of attendees. Displaying New Orleans pieces struck from three different governmental authorities (Union, State of Louisiana, and the Confederate States of America) brought about an excellent teaching aid for Civil War history and demonstrated the detailed numismatic research being performed by LSCC members.”

Summer FUN is July 9-11, Jason Feldman will host the club meeting on Friday July 10, at 9AM.

The Baltimore Expo is scheduled for July 16-19. There will not be a club table at this July show; however, Len Augsburg will be hosting the club meeting as usual Friday July 17 at 9AM.

Next month The ANA!

The Curious Collector (Continued from page 4)

ately be able to answer such questions.

Once the cataloguer enters the description, the proofreaders take over. This process will vary according to the auction house. Heritage does several rounds composed of various personnel. You really cannot be careful enough – every catalog puts the reputation of the auction house on the line and, with millions of dollars of material on the line, mistakes can be costly. A coin only gets one shot to be “fresh” – the exact same coin showing up in consecutive auctions is really bad for marketing, so you have to get it right the first time.

After doing this awhile you start looking at how everyone else catalogs. I recently read through the inventory of a California dealer and it was plainly obvious that whoever was doing their work was most familiar with the Heritage standards, probably from having worked there for awhile. Other dealers are all

over the place and if you are one-person operation, time is understandably scarce. Some dealers repeat the same words over and over – this is another challenge of cataloging, to keep things fresh as possible. One way to avoid this at the auction house level is to route coins to different catalogers. Suppose you get two 1873-CC dollars in the same sale – with a whole team of catalogers at hand, you can split the coins up and get different perspectives in the same catalog.

Of course, it is all about the coins in the end. Yes, we have a large framework and a set of rules to observe, but the real secret is to let the coin talk and try to create a connection with the reader. The coin may be rare, especially eye appealing, high grade, or whatever, but the trick is to uncover what makes each coin special and highlight that in a professional way. The story is obvious for something like an 1853 No Arrows quarter and in some sense a coin like that is less challenging to describe than a circulated 1858 quarter. But all coins have stories and the task of the cataloguer is to ferret them out.



LSCC Member in the Spotlight:

Mark Verbeck, LSCC #317

by Tony Barreca, LSCC #2151

Tony's Comment: I must admit that when I read about Mark's greatest scores, my teeth started dropping out of my jaw as my face took on an eerie, greenish hue. And that was my reaction to his second best (I don't know squat about half dimes). Nice one, Mark!

Tony. *When did you first become interested in coin collecting and numismatics? Was there a specific experience or set of experiences that triggered it? What series did you start collecting when you did?*

Mark. My father was a dedicated collector of coins from circulation. He probably started collecting during the World War. He also had a well-used second edition *Redbook* that I gradually appropriated. I displayed my fledgling collection at a church event when I was eight. My grandmother gave me several of her coins including an 1860-O dollar and an 1848-O eagle when I was about eleven. Those called for a new level of seriousness.

Cents through dimes were my main pursuit as a boy, though I had quarters and half dollars too. I searched bank bags of cents and nickels occasionally while in high school but found little in return for my time and effort. When I began attending small local shows a few years after college, full horn Buffalo Nickels were an enthusiasm for two or three years. It was surprising to see which prices had and had not advanced during my ten-year absence.

Tony. *How did you initially become interested in Liberty Seated (LS) coins? Which LS denominations do you focus on currently? Previously?*

Mark. I read an article entitled "Liberty Seated Dimes" by Lawrence Block in the August 1964 *Numismatic Scrapbook* magazine, and I never quite forgot it. This was a pioneering effort but it remains basically sound today. I saw an 1889-S dime in Dan Brown's downtown Denver coin shop about ten years later and, remembering Block's comments, it seemed too

good to pass up. That is the first Liberty Seated coin I remember buying.

Half dimes and dimes are my primary focus in Liberty Seated coins. Half dimes came first, since they form a shorter series with fewer expensive rarities. However, I was always watching for dimes or other denominations that seemed scarce or unappreciated.

Tony. *Within the series of LS coins you focus on, do you consider yourself a variety collector? If so, what is your approach to variety collecting?*

Mark. I collect varieties to some extent. If a variety is included in my Library of Coins album or if I consider it a significant issue, I will try to obtain one. There are only four Liberty Seated dime varieties beyond the album that qualify as coins I truly need: the 1841-O Closed Bud Reverse with Large O and Small O, 1854-O Shattered Obverse, and 1873 Doubled Die Obverse. I lack the Small O. This is a somewhat arbitrary group, all rare and all a result of inattention to detail during production, and each is spectacular in its way.

I am more interested in mintmark sizes and cuds than in misplaced digits. Collecting by die marriage can be rewarding, but diagnostics are more salient on earlier coins or larger coins.

Tony. *How long have you been an LSCC member? In your opinion, what are the main advantages of belonging to the club?*

Mark. The first *Gobrecht Journal* I received in the mail was Number 4 and that dates me to early 1976. I cannot imagine where I would be without all the articles, conversations, and market activity that came my way as a result of membership. Without this never-ending seminar, I might have drifted away long ago. The people and their projects have been as interesting as the coins.

(Continued on page 9)



LSCC Member in the Spotlight Continued from page 8)

Tony. *Do you ever participate in Club activities? If so, which ones? Have you ever visited the Clubs message boards? Attended a meeting in person? Which activities could you see yourself participating in at a future time? Have you ever actively recommended that a collector friend join the LSCC? If not, why not?*

Mark. I have tried to become more active these past few years. I participate on the Liberty Seated coin boards, sometimes providing an answer, but just as often seeking one. My attendance at Club meetings has improved and I now grab a chair whenever possible. It has been my experience that serious collectors and even dealers are often hesitant about joining a specialty club. Yet the downside risk is so small, while the upside potential is almost limitless.

Tony. *If you could change one thing about the LSCC, what would it be?*

Mark. I would like to see more women and younger people in our club and in the hobby. I also wish we could create a format in which collectors could bring examples of the same variety for viewing and comparison. It would be great to see ten 1849-O quarters or 1853-O No Arrows half dimes on the same table.

Tony. *In your collecting career, what was the greatest coup you ever pulled off when purchasing a coin? Your biggest mistake?*

Mark. My favorite purchase is a 1795 half dime that cost \$600 in 1990. It is the LM-4 (V-3) variety, quite rare, and with an impressive cud that obliterates all but the inner point of four stars on the right side. Best of all, it is unimpaired, a very unusual occurrence for a VG10 coin. Not far behind is an 1841-O Large O Closed Bud Reverse dime with VF30 details found just last year for less than \$50.

Since I do not sell many coins, mistakes tend to be missed opportunities. An 1872-CC dime graded PCGS VF25 marked at \$3,500 and a VF 1805 half dime at about \$2,500 come to mind. Both were nearly perfect for their grade, and I recognized the quality and rarity. That is expensive material by my standards, but what was I thinking?

Tony. *Do you think of the hobby as being a form of investment as well? If so, how do you approach your use of coins as an investment vehicle?*

Mark. It has always been my intention to make astute purchases or at least reasonable ones. If my notions concerning coin values are mistaken, it is not for lack of attention. But I do not think of my collection as an investment like a stock portfolio or a retirement fund. I consider my coins a store of value, small-scale luxuries, and I hope disposition can take place in an orderly manner rather than under duress. They might be compared to carefully chosen paintings or antiques, pleasing items for a temporary custodian to admire and have at hand.

Tony. *What is/was your work/career?*

Mark. I worked as a technical writer, inventory manager, and in various logistics and warehousing roles.

Tony. *What other hobbies/interests do you have besides numismatics?*

Mark. I am fairly passionate about jazz, but decidedly not smooth jazz. Nearby Chicago is one of the few American cities with a consistently strong jazz scene. Baseball is also an abiding interest, though the Cubs are an acquired taste.

Tony. *What is your greatest or most memorable personal achievement?*

Mark. I have overcome or managed some personal challenges, but I feel the best is yet to come. So ask me again in ten years.



Gerry Fortin Rare Coins - The Daily Blog

by Gerry Fortin, LSCC #1054

Can you imagine sitting down each morning at 6 AM and typing a daily commentary for the numismatic community to read? For most individuals, this thought would be overwhelming given the required commitment and daily topic development. But since retiring from the semiconductor industry and launching Gerry Fortin Rare Coins, I have written a daily online commentary since July 2014. The commentary has become well known as the "Gerry's Daily Blog" and is available at

<http://www.seateddimevarieties.com/DailyBlog.htm>.

A broad range of topics are covered including Gerry Fortin Rare Coins (GFRC) news updates, global financial news, numismatic topics and personal commentaries on a host of pertinent issues facing our country. My life has been blessed with substantial global travels and residing in China, Singapore, and Malaysia. Living overseas is fertile ground for examining alternate political systems and appreciating how the rest of the world views our country and culture. Add in a numismatic passion along with a personal company start up and the ingredients for a daily commentary were in place.

Back in 2004, I launched a message board as a marketing vehicle for the Liberty Seated Dime web-book (*The Definite Resource for Liberty Seated Dime Variety Collectors*) and Liberty Seated Collectors Club and located at <http://seateddimes.yuku.com>. This message board evolved and remains active today as an LSCC online social platform and news outlet. During the early days of the message board, I spent considerable time as moderator and attempting to build a numismatic community focused on Liberty Seated coinage. Gerry's Daily Blog continues my personal passion for sharing information with expanded topics beyond numismatics. I learned that most individuals visit message boards to read and to feel part of a community. The Daily Blog resulted from the message board learnings and today a 200+ person community visits each day to share ideas and current news. Many readers send private feedback via email with their points being



published in subsequent Blogs.

Publishing a daily blog requires substantial offline reading to remain current on global events along with business and financial news. Each day, I receive numerous newsletters via email and will quickly scan these writings for potential Daily Blog topics. My sources include Seeking Alpha, John Mauldin, The Daily Reckoning, Agora Financial, and BBC News. Since spending most of my working days at a computer

processing coin images, updating the GFRC website and corresponding with customers, access to the newsletters is a quick and a stimulating break from ongoing numismatic sales tasks.

Working alone each day from a home office may seem like the ideal retirement job and in many ways, this is true. However, I do miss the business corporate life with ongoing meetings and idea exchanges with colleagues, customers, and vendors. The Daily Blog fills part of that communication void. Sharing personal ideas or cultural perspectives via a blog is a reasonable proxy. The follow on email feedback and ideas exchanges with readers fills that social void. The best part is that nearly all the Daily Blog readers are Liberty Seated Collectors Club members which allows me to maintain direct contact with a large subset of our organization.

Thank you for reading through this article and please do visit the Daily Blog when times allows.



Previously Unknown and Complete BU Set of Liberty Seated Dollars Turns Up!

by W. David Perkins, LSCC #790

As a long time student of the Liberty Seated Dollars 1840-1873, with a research focus on the great collections and collectors over the past two centuries, you can imagine how I reacted when I read the following in the Summer 2015 issue of *FUN Topics* (magazine),

Not too long ago a collector called our headquarters and asked if he could bring his recently acquired COMPLETE BU COLLECTION OF SEATED DOLLARS to our offices for possible slabbing.

The author quickly had my attention. With only one Mint State example of the extremely rare 1870-S Seated Dollar known and held in a long time collection, this could prove interesting.

The balance of the paragraph tells the “Rest of the Story,” as the late Paul Harvey used to say.

One of our secretaries made him an appointment and, on the next day, he was sit-

ting across from me in our reception room. “I’ve even got an example of the unknown 1873-S,” said this very happy novice collector. He wouldn’t remain happy much longer! I carefully explained to him that his complete collection was made up of low quality, underweight, Chinese-style, counterfeit Seated Dollars. After first expressing skepticism regarding my opinion, he finally admitted he had purchased these “BU Seated Dollars” for their silver weight (about \$20 each at the time). The purchase had taken place in a poor section of St. Petersburg [Florida], according to the buyer. **LESSON TO BE LEARNED:** If a deal seems too good to be true, it probably IS too good to be true!

Oh well. It was fun to ponder, for a few seconds anyway.





Of Fips, Bits, and Picayunes...

Some coin terms of the 1840s and 1850s

by Jim Laughlin, LSCC #876

The following newspaper article was written by unknown author living in 1898, reminiscing about the changes he had seen growing up 50 years earlier in Ohio, Illinois, and later New York. What is rather unique, the author chose to write about coins in circulation and the terms associated with them. Here is a firsthand account reaffirming that our Liberty Seated coinage in the 1840s and 1850s circulated hand in hand with a "good deal of foreign coins."

March 20, 1898, Los Angeles Herald

The Coins of Former Days: Some of the terms Used in This Country to Designate Them

In Ohio, in 1844 and previously, there was a good deal of foreign coin in circulation, mostly Spanish, with some of the old state coinage of different states occasionally making its appearance. One of the most plentiful of these foreign coins was a piece which passed current for 6 ¼ cents. In Ohio this was known as a fip-penny bit, a contraction, probably, of fivepenny bit. The half dimes of American coinage were also becoming frequent at that time, and as a distinction between the half dime and the fippenny bit, the former was contracted to the word "fip." The dime went under its lawful name, while the old Spanish double of the fip-penny bit was known as the "bit", and the Spanish and Mexican quarter dollars were nearly always referred to as "two bits." The latter term, I think, still obtains in reference to quarter dollar American pieces in some sections. There was also a New York state "two bit" coin, as well as a "bit" of the same coinage, which was sometimes called the "York shilling." The New England shilling's value was 16 2/3 cents. The old fashioned big copper cent of American coinage was plentiful, while occasionally an English halfpenny of copper was found floating around, generally passing on the same basis as the American copper cent. Queen Victoria's head was then shown on the English halfpennies.

Later, when, as a boy, I removed with my mother to Illinois, I met my first stumbling block in money names. There the fippeny bit was the picayune, while the fip had its proper name of a half dime or 5 cents. But the larger coins retained the old names, as did the copper cents. As near as I can learn, the term picayune originated with the French, who had settled St. Louis and had settlements at points all the way from New Orleans to St. Louis and the further northwest, and their names for money predominated in that region. Still later, when I had strayed away to New York State, I again encountered new names for money. There everything was based on the "shilling", which represented 12 ½ cents. A quarter of a dollar was always "two shillings", and all sums under \$100 dollars were calculated on the same basis. When I asked the price of board, I was told it ranged from 16 to 30 shillings a week. The price of a suit of clothes was generally stated in shillings. That was all right for the natives, but I confess I had frequently to brush up my arithmetic to get at what 33 shillings, 22 shillings, 17 shillings or some other high number amounted to. It was all clear enough when it was 2, 4 or 6 shillings, but when it got above a dollar it required some "ciphering" on the part of a stranger to get correct results.

The three cent piece, originally coined in silver, came into general circulation in the north about 1850, and was later made in nickel, being coined in that metal at about the same time as the present nickel five cent piece.

Some time before the Civil War the old fashioned copper cent was replaced at the mint with the present small copper cents and two cent pieces. Later the first nickels were made, but almost went out of circulation during the war, and were succeeded by the fractional currency of that day, issued in 5, 10, 25 and 50 cent bills. These were never very popular with the masses, and were looked upon by the government as a temporary expedient. The most popular designation for them was

(Continued on page 13)



(Continued from page 12)

“shinplasters,” though in Memphis and other parts of the country they were referred to as “chicken feed.” During the war there were many other substitutes for money, mostly in the form of cardboard promises to pay everything, from a drink of whiskey or a ride on the cars to a suit of clothes, from a quart of milk or a pound of beefsteak to a week’s salary. They have dropped out of use in most sections, and in their place Uncle Sam’s coppers, nickels, dimes, quarters, half dollars and “dollars of the daddies” now reign supreme—Galveston News.

Some of the material contained in this article was familiar and some I had clearly no idea. No doubt our author suspected the same from his readership back in 1898, and here we are 117 years later again contemplating what he wrote.

As has been referenced in the *E-Gobrecht* before, Neil Carothers’ *Fractional Money* is a valuable reference for the monetary history of the nation from colonial times thru 1930. After a quick re-read and some further checking via the internet, our author’s perplexing reference to “five penny and a bit” came more into focus.

The colonial government of Pennsylvania in the 1780s had established that a Spanish milled dollar was worth 7 shillings and six pence in Pennsylvania money (i.e. a Spanish dollar equaled 90 pence in Pennsylvania money). A small silver Spanish coin known as a Medio Real ($\frac{1}{2}$ Real), which was $\frac{1}{16}$ of a Spanish milled dollar, had a value of (90 pence divided by 16) which gave a rounded value of five and half pence which is where the “five penny bit” referred to in the article came from.

It is hard to believe that 1780’s colonial Pennsylvania reckoning of values of Spanish fractional silver coins had held up and was still being used in 1840s Ohio. Instead of figuring the Medio Real piece at $6\frac{1}{4}$ U.S. Cents and calling it a $6\frac{1}{4}$ cent piece or a 6 cent piece; the population held to centuries old reckoning of foreign coins in shillings and pence and continued to call the Medio Real a “five and half pence piece” which was shortened to a “fippeny bit.”

Our author also talks of the New York “bit” and “two bits” which stems from New York having valued the Spanish dollar differently than Pennsylvania. New York rated the Spanish dollar at eight shillings. Each New York shilling was therefore $\frac{1}{8}$ of a Spanish Dollar or 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ cents. It corresponded exactly to the Spanish 1 real coin, which was also $\frac{1}{8}$ of a Spanish Dollar. This piece had long been known as a “bit.” Over time, they dropped the “New” and a “York shilling” was understood to be a Spanish 1 Real or “bit” piece worth 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ cents American.

Too add even more confusion, colonial “New England” (i.e. Massachusetts) had valued the Spanish Dollar at still a different rate than neighboring Pennsylvania and New York; New England valued the Spanish Dollar at Six shillings (i.e. 72 pence). This works out that a Spanish Real ($\frac{1}{8}$ Dollar) was worth ninepence in New England currency. The author makes reference that a shilling of “New England” was worth 16 $\frac{2}{3}$ cents, which would be the American valuation and appears to be correct if we work backwards equating ninepence “New England” to 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ cents U.S.

It is clearly surprising to read that these colonial terms of value were still in use in the country in the 1840s and 1850s and that they even had spread out even into Ohio. As the U.S. Mint had only begun producing coins in 1793 and the article was referring to 1844 Ohio; that is only a 51 year period of U.S. coins being denominated in cents replacing a centuries old practice of reckoning in shillings and pence. The percentage of Spanish foreign coin in circulation, probably kept the older colonial reckoning terms still in play, as people still needed a term to refer to the small Spanish silver coins in circulation alongside the Liberty Seated and U.S. bust dimes and half-dimes.

A “picayune” according to Carothers’ *Fractional Currency* (Page 35) was likely a corruption of “picaillon,” the name of a small French silver coin. New Orleans and the Mississippi had been transferred from France to Spain in 1763 and no doubt the French colonist had nicknamed the small Spanish Medio Real in circulation, a “picayune.” Our author indicates that in Illinois, the Spanish Medio Real ($\frac{1}{16}$ Spanish dol-

(Continued on page 14)



(Continued from page 13)

lar) was called a “picayune,” and not a “fippenny” that he had been used to back in Ohio, no doubt due to prior French influence. According to Carothers, the “picayune” term was applied first to the Spanish Medio, and later to the U.S. Half Dime.

In 1857, Congress passed a law removing the legal tender status of foreign coins and made efforts to remove foreign coins from domestic circulation. In early 1862, silver disappeared from circulation in the east as a result of hoarding due to the Civil War. Both events must have contributed to the final demise of

anyone still reckoning in colonial shillings and pence, the curtain was drawn.

Sources

Values of the Spanish Dollar in Colonial State Currency. Magazine of Western History, Volume 4. Number 2, Page 143, June 1886. Available via Internet per Google Books.

Fractional Money, By Neil Carothers, 1988 reprint by Bowers and Merena Galleries

Newspaper source: California Digital Newspaper Collection, Center for Bibliographic Studies and Research, University of California, Riverside, <http://cdnr.ucr.edu>

Subscriber Correspondence

From Dave Ginsburg: I read with interest Jim Laughlin’s article last month regarding the 1842 attempt, during John Tyler’s administration, to close the branch mints.

As many of you may know, over the past several years, I have been compiling information about the officer and staff of the Mint and its branches, especially of the southern branch mints.

Jim’s article prompted me to take another look at the officers of the southern mints during the early 1840s. I was interested to note that while President Tyler’s nominees for Superintendents of the Charlotte and Dahlonega mints were confirmed without incident in 1841, there was a significant struggle to replace the Superintendent of the New Orleans Mint in 1842.

The incumbent was Joseph M. Kennedy, who had been appointed by President Van Buren, a Democrat, during the Senate’s recess, formally nominated on January 23, 1840 and confirmed by the Senate on March 13, 1840.

On February 21, 1842, President Tyler (nominally a Whig) nominated James H. Caldwell to replace Mr. Kennedy. On June 13th, the Senate formally declined to consent to Mr. Caldwell’s appointment. Not a person to give up easily, President Tyler

re-nominated him on July 18th. Three days later, on the 21st, the Senate again declined to confirm Mr. Caldwell.

On July 23rd, President Tyler nominated William M. Carpenter for the position, but on August 31st, the Senate postponed consideration of Mr. Carpenter’s nomination indefinitely.

Apparently a very stubborn man, President Tyler that day nominated John M. Bell for the position. In a very quick response, the Senate, also on August 31st, ordered Mr. Bell’s nomination to “lie on the table.”

The third try was apparently the “charm” for Mr. Caldwell, as President Tyler stopped trying to replace him. He served through the remainder of President Tyler’s term and through the term of President Polk (a fellow Democrat) until he was replaced by President Fillmore, another Whig, with Robert McAlpen, in 1850.

Thanks to Jim’s article, I now have a signpost to point me in the right direction to search for more information about the political squabbles underlying these failed nominations.



The Mysterious Wooden Box from the 19th Century – Part I

by Paul Kluth, LSCC #1994

This is the first of a two-part article. Part I appears here. Part II will appear in The Gobrecht Journal Vol. 41.3 (Summer 2015), Issue 123. (I allowed very liberal editorial leeway in this Part I.) - The Editor.

Episode I

Wild Imaginations or Just Wishful Thinking?

Is it Pandora's Box? Could it be that Greek mythical box that Pandora, the first woman on earth would accidentally open and curse the world with unimaginable evils? If it is, numismatists today might not even be concerned. Collectors already have the dreaded curse of the modern Chinese counterfeits to contend with and the professionally doctored coins by those in their own rank and file, both evils afflicting the hobby. What about Captain Kidd's Treasure Chest, the legendary pirate whose supposed treasure has never been found? Now that would be interesting! Well, that wooden chest is believed by some to have already been discovered and has found a permanent home in a privately-owned pirate museum in Florida. Yes, an artifact such as this, if genuine, belongs in a museum.

How about a small wooden vault from the 200 year old mystery of Oak Island in Nova Scotia? This is not likely the case here as there is no apparent water damage present from booby-trapped underground flood tunnels, though the box is made of oak and shows some signs of aging and deterioration.

When a newly discovered artifact from the past surfaces after all these years, imaginations tend to run wild as explanations are sought from experts in the field and credible evidence supporting the find are researched from any possible remaining records and known history surrounding the object. The research process can be both a tedious endeavor and rewarding adventure to say the least. The investigation can also turn out to be a major disappointment and waste of

valuable time, effort and money. Nonetheless, those with a passion to pursue the truth and chase down the hard facts usually are benefited by at least a gain in knowledge from the experience, no matter the outcome. Sometimes an outcome can be worthwhile and add to the historical record.

So "Mr. Mystery Box", what is your purpose? Why were you made? How were you made? What is the birthplace and date of birth on your birth certificate (design drawings)? Do you now or did you have any siblings or like-cousins from your inventor? Were you patented? Did you sit pretty on a store shelf full of expensive niceties in some luxurious boutique or did you protect valuable commodities on an East Indies Trading Co. voyage to and from the Far East? Where have you traveled and where have you been all these years?



Here is what we can at least see, measure, and confirm: The wooden box is mostly made of oak, probably white oak, and weighs almost exactly 25 pounds, a fairly heavy box for its size, and definitely rugged and sturdy for its purpose. Outside dimensions are 17 5/8" lengthwise across the front by 11 5/8" wide by 10 3/4" high to the top of the box (and 14 7/8" to the top of the finials), or if rounded to

the nearest inch 18"L x 12"W x 11"H (or 15"H to top of finials).

The heavy decorative hinges manufactured in a Fleur-de-lis style are most likely made of bronze as are the decorative finials which are both quite elaborate and highly functional as a latching mechanism for the top oak cover. The design is really ingenious as you

(Continued on page 16)



(Continued from page 15)

will see from the photos.

Episode II Believe It or Not, A True Story

What you are about to read is a true story. A story a little different than the typical coin collecting stories you hear or read about these days. You could say this story is about “thinking outside of the box” (pun intended) and about being in the right place at the right time while all along believing in the existence of an object that must surely exist even though no one had ever seen, or heard of one before.

The Mysterious Wooden Box does have an owner. For now, we will call him “RG” from his/her initials. Fortunately for the box, RG is a serious numismatist and collector of Early Americana and Early Copper who has, for the past 30 years, safeguarded a rare find.

At the early age of 16, RG was an avid coin collector who was mostly interested at the time in early Half Cents and Large Cents not only by date, but by variety, by various types of errors, and by late die states (LDS). When it came to die states that were breaking up, the greater the die break(s) and/or formation of a cud, the better. With this type of collecting fascination, RG would think about the U.S. Mint’s manufacturing process as it was known to him for the period and would visualize how the coins he was interested in were struck, and what could go wrong from a quality assurance standpoint.

During his early collecting days, RG’s hobby friend and mentor Dr. Robert (Bob) Shalowitz was a positive influence and driving force behind RG’s numismatic interests and pursuits. Bob was best known in Early Copper circles and as a creative dealer in quality coins.

RG wanted to learn all that he could about the coin production process both in Philadelphia and the various Branch Mints during the 19th Century. Based on what he read in numismatic books, he knew working dies for the most part were shipped each year from the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia to Branch Mints in New Orleans, Louisiana; Charlotte, North Carolina; and



Dahlonega, Georgia starting in about 1838-39 when actual coin production at the new minting facilities began. It was earlier in 1835 that Congress passed legislation creating these three new Branch Mints both to satisfy the need for circulating coinage and to facilitate growing commerce centers at the lower Mississippi River and in other southern states where gold had been recently discovered.

In the later part of the 19th Century, working dies would also have to be shipped to additional Branch Mints built in Carson City, Nevada; Denver, Colorado; and San Francisco, California, all to facilitate commerce in the expanding West.

Many articles that have appeared in *The Gobrecht Journal* and books on the topic of Liberty Seated coinage address the number of obverse and reverse dies supposed shipped from the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia where they were produced to the Branch Mint & Assay Offices for striking coins based on Annual Report(s) of the Director of the Mint and various “Records of the U.S. Mint” housed at the National Archives (Record Group 104, 1792-1994).

However, all the U.S. Mint records really tell us is that working dies were shipped, but they don’t tell us how the dies were shipped or what type of container they were shipped in? At present, there are no known photographs or design specifications or blueprints for containers used to ship dies in the 1800’s? RG had seen photos of old “bullion coin boxes” used to hold blank planchets and struck coins as these boxes are commonly seen in the Coining Dept. rooms of the Philadelphia Mint from historical photos. The coin boxes shown are traditionally believed to hold blanks

(Continued on page 17)



(Continued from page 16)

or coins for large denomination coins like silver dollars and U.S. gold, and most U.S. Mint photos taken for press release or documentation purposes would have focused on the larger or more valuable denominations like Morgan Silver Dollars or Twenty Dollar gold pieces anyway.

As a young person, RG had always tended to trust the "Universe" as someone interested in science, evolution and the human endeavor in the natural world. Based on this belief, he trusted the Universe for answers to age old questions or just about any logical question he wanted to ask. "If you ask the Universe, it will answer!" With this approach, RG basically raised the question "how did the working dies manufactured in Philadelphia get shipped to the various Branch Mints and what did a shipping container look like?" RG wanted to see a "die box". Well, believe it or not, the Universe did answer... not right away, but in good time and at a time of its own choosing.

In his pursuits to track down a die box, RG inquired with notable dealers at the time Lester Merkin, Norman Stack, and Walter Breen about "what a die box would actually look like"? RG especially liked Walter Breen for his vast knowledge of U.S. coins. Walter was certainly well known and always considered to be an asset to dealers and serious collectors for his numismatic knowledge during his days in the hobby. It is noteworthy to mention that RG from the early age of 6 started woodworking in his father's furniture business and later up to the age of 22 was a full-time cabinet maker for his dad. While continuing to collect coins and eventually becoming a coin dealer himself, RG understood the design and business of making furniture. All the while in the late 1970s, one of his best friends "A.J. Lynch" happened to be an antique dealer running his own antique shop in Baltimore in Fells Point. Called "Old Oak and Collectibles" and located at the intersection of S. Broadway and Aliceanna Streets, RG and A.J. would hang out together at the shop, party a lot around

Baltimore, and even spend good times talking in local bars about their interests, business and all kinds of old collectibles.

One day in the early 1980's, A.J. was attending one of the many antique and estate auctions he would frequent along the East Coast for potential shop purchases. On this particular day, A.J. was browsing lots at Crumpton Auction on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. He saw the box with an identifying metal plate on the front and knew RG would be interested, so he called RG to describe what he had found and ask how much he should bid on behalf of his good buddy?



Even if the box turned out to not be the real thing, RG knew the Universe had answered his quest for what was in his mind a "holy grail" of U.S. Mint artifacts. RG urgently responded "Buy It". "Okaaay..." A.J. replied, "but what should my maximum bid be?" Again, RG said to "BUY IT!" After an aggressive stance and successful bid, A.J. was able to bring the unusual box back home with him to Baltimore for RG.

If you didn't already know, Crumpton Auction claims to sell on average between 3,000-6,000 lots a week that are consigned on the morning of the sale, and are sold that same day by 5 PM. This volume of lots and speed of sale is truly unique only to this auction firm. Every Wednesday, hundreds of antique dealers, junk buyers, deal seekers, gawkers, and shop-a-holics head to the largest weekly auction in the world, yes, that's the World. This auction, a 3rd generation family-owned business since 1961, has had such recognition that it literally absorbed the town's name as its own brand. Crumpton's still operates today in much the same way as it did 30 years ago. One can only imagine how many great finds have crossed the auction block there over the years.

It all happened so fast! It is no wonder the box appeared and disappeared so quickly at auction without

(Continued on page 18)



(Continued from page 17)

a trace or even a momentary glimpse by the numismatic fraternity at the time. Speaking of being at the right place at the right time, this rare find was likely in someone's large accumulation of household items, or part of a family estate being liquidated for tax purposes or the benefit of heirs. It makes perfect sense that a sales venue like Crumpton's is where a piece of furniture like this box would turn up practically right out of the blue. It would certainly be fascinating to learn who owned the box and for how long before it appeared at auction. Did the box reside with a family member having been passed down for generations from an early U.S. Mint employee, or a person who obtained the box as U.S. Government surplus, or a person involved in some type of dishonest activity? The box obviously escaped the normal wear and tear of its intended use? It certainly missed becoming scrap or firewood. This is just part of the mystery surrounding the box!

Then in 1985, RG took a chance by briefly displaying the shipping box at his table during the ANA Convention that year in Baltimore. Upon hearing about and seeing the box for themselves, prominent coin dealers at the time made attempts at offering to buy the box. First Art Kagin, then Harvey Stack expressed interest in purchasing the box either for themselves or for one of their clients. John Ford, who happened to stop by, did comment that he was aware of another similar box in Massachusetts that was broken and in pieces. Interesting! At the time, these well respected and knowledgeable dealers in the hobby were all interested in what they had never seen or heard of before (at least for a box intact?). Of course, the box was really not for sale and promptly went back into hiding!

Again in 1996 at another Baltimore ANA Convention, the box was briefly displayed. Some U.S. Mint officials representing their booth for the public at the Show, who viewed the box, claimed that this was a first for them to be able to see. One official hinted about donating the Box to the Mint's museum in Philadelphia. Again the box went back to its familiar state of being in the shadows, hibernating for decades you might say, until now.

Episode III

The Mystery and Speculation Unfolds, Many Questions and Too Few Answers

So why would an old wooden box used to store or ship dies from the U.S. Mint be important to coin collectors in general, numismatic historians, and to Liberty Seated collectors in particular? Assuming the box is a genuine artifact from the 19th Century, it would be the first such box discovered and known to exist intact. It could also be as old as 125 years or even date back to around 1835 when the first three Branch Mints were authorized by Congress. Many U.S. Mint records have been lost over the years and records for a box like this might not have been considered important enough for purposes of permanent record retention.

If the wooden container is authentic and from the 19th Century as believed, it could have been used to store and transport both obverse and reverse working dies for the various Liberty Seated denominations struck during the period. This could have included Liberty Seated Dollars, Trade Dollars, Liberty Seated Half Dollars, Quarters, Twenty Cent Pieces, Dimes, and Half Dimes. Working dies from other U.S. coin series minted during the same time span could have also been stored or transported including dies for Morgan Dollars and for all the U.S. Gold denominations.

With this in mind, serious collectors of 19th Century U.S. coinage are especially interested in U.S. Mint manufacturing processes including those coins struck at the various Branch mints around the country. There is much written about the dies themselves; their useful life and their variation, their die states and their marriage of different obverse and reverse dies. There is also much written about die deterioration in the form of rusted dies, crumbled dies, and die breaks, and die errors like double dies, recut dates, and misplaced date and mintmark punches.

Many Liberty Seated collectors also enjoy collecting by die variety and die state, and are fascinated like RG in all the die anomalies that appear in the series across all denominations. As collectors, we sometimes marvel at all the interesting defects, and retooling, repunching and polishing that went on to preserve the dies for an extended useful life. This interest instinc-

(Continued on page 19)



(Continued from page 18)

tively leads to wanting to know more about how working dies were routinely cared for, stored when not in use and transported from the mother ship in Philadelphia to the Branch mint locations. Learning about old Mint equipment/supplies and early manufacturing processes along with the associated American history also fuels the interest and can ignite a greater passion for specialized collecting.

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So is the Box a previously unknown and rare artifact from the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia?

The old Box is as acquired over 30 years ago by the current owner and certainly contains some old dirt, dust and cobwebs. Okay, maybe some of the cobwebs are not quite that old or antique.

Upon closer examination, the box has all the attributes and physical characteristics to be a genuine supply item of the U.S. Mint. However, it is believed that portions of the exterior oak surfaces have been refinished, the bottom oak panel may have been trimmed off on the left and right sides long ago, the galvanized strips were possibly used as replacement brackets to give the box added support and strength, and the brass latch for the cover probably replaced another earlier latching device.

The galvanized sheet metal strips used as supporting brackets for the base and two sides, and the part of a brass latch (that looks more like a modern window latch) for the top cover are all that are believed to not be original to the Box as manufactured by or for the U.S. Mint. The original latch or locking mechanism was probably broken and lost over time, and the galvanized strips were probably added to provide support to the base and sides that had weakened with age. The original sup-

porting brackets either never existed or became severely rusted and deteriorated.

However, galvanized sheet steel (steel coated with hot molten zinc to prevent corrosion and rust) became common during the second half of the 19th century, so maybe these galvanized brackets though crude looking compared to the rest of the box's construction might be original to the box or at least a later quick repair to strengthen the box. The brass window latch, only half of which remains today, must be a more recent replacement. It could not be determined when these brass window latches were patented or first manufactured.

With the front view of the Box with lid closed, there are two holes in the center of the front edge where original hardware for a latch is missing.

It is just a hunch, but the decorative (Fleur-de-lis style) and heavy built hinges lead us to believe the Box was designed for shipping to the Branch Mint in New Orleans? But maybe this was a standard design used for all die boxes for all the Branch Mints that existed during the 19th Century?



Inside on the underside of the cover is a lining of black Gutta-percha material. During the mid-19th century, gutta-percha was used for a myriad of domestic and industrial purposes, including use to make furniture, notably by the Gutta-Percha Company (established in 1847). Was this sheet of softer material used to provide extra inside lid protection and support, and used as a spacer sheet to help insulate and stabilize the contents inside? With his furniture background, RG immediately recognized this component of the

fabricated Box.

Here is the intriguing part. When you look inside at the bottom of the Box, you will see 15 circles impressed into the wood (each 3 inches in diameter).

(Continued on page 20)



(Continued from page 19)

Does the diameter of the circles tell us what denomination of obverse and reverse dies were last shipped in the Box based on the diameter of the cylindrical shafts or base of the dies (unless the circles were from some type of round holder used to protect the dies)? A protective wood insert with fifteen 3 inch holes may have also been placed in the bottom of the box to separately protect each cylindrical die. Upon close visual inspection, there are no remaining remnants of a protective holder. At the present time, no microscopic analysis of the box has been done. Inside box dimensions are 15" length by 9½" wide.

Each circle indentation has a screw hole in the center (hard to see in image), so was this a way to screw down a protective holder or the die itself in the Box? There are also 4 large holes in the base of the Box that are believed to be used to bolt the Box down somehow (maybe on a Mint shelf, or in a ship to New Orleans, or in a railroad car?). Drilled in a rectangular shape, the larger holes are 4½" apart in one direction and 3¼" apart in the other direction.

A front identifying plate so crucial to the box's initial discovery is also believed to be made of heavy stamped or cast bronze. The plate reads "DESIGNED and BUILT at U.S. MINT. PHILADELPHIA" in four rows of lettering.

Carrying handles for the Box were the functional openings on each side that one could slip their hands through to pick up the Box with easy maneuverability. The front side of the Box also has this type of opening which leads to another possible purpose. One

idea is that the openings were used to slide a wooden plank through for carrying or mounting.

It has been suggested that the Box might have been used to store cylindrical weights for the large and highly engineered scales used to weigh gold and silver bullion upon receipt and to weigh struck coin before delivery. This explanation could be very plausible given the fact that the main Mint in Philadelphia and each Branch Mint/Assay Office would use heavy, precision scales.



The functional openings on three sides do however defeat concerns for both security and protection against moisture and contaminants.

Some think the dies should have been packed in grease or oil to protect the die steel from moisture and contaminants. Maybe the dies were covered with a protective coating of wax to protect the face of the die?



Either way, the Mint's most precious asset was in many ways the working dies it produced to strike the nation's coinage. Because of the early Mint's experience with dies that would tend to break early in their useful life, it was important for the Mint to ultimately engineer and produce dies that would last through their expected production runs or longer. Great care was probably taken to protect the working dies and the Mint would have also taken adequate safeguards with the weights used for expensive scales. A quality protective container for both would have been the norm.

The Box might brighten up quite nicely with a professional restoration, but original condition is the first consideration just like "originality" is the preferred state of preservation for serious coin collectors.

(Continued on page 21)



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So who is RG? You may even recognize him at various coin shows around the country. Richard (Rick) Gross is a coin dealer who specializes in Early Americana among other rare coins. Rick is now especially interested in tracking down the true historical facts behind one of his favorite numismatic collectibles.

As the universe evolved, RG's friend T.J. passed away unexpectedly several years ago and his antique shop location was eventually redeveloped into a Subway shop. Crumpton's and, of course, the U.S. Mint are still both operating successfully.



Article continued in Part II...

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Double Dimes – the United States Twenty-cent Piece, a new book by Lane Brunner and John Frost, available both as a web book at no cost, and a Print Edition. Spiral bound, 179 pages, nearly 400 photographs. The Print Edition is available from the authors at www.doubledimes.com.

Holt Rarities is Buying and Selling Liberty Seated, Federal, and Colonial Issue coins of all denominations. Check out our website at www.holtrararities.com or call (931) 581-1890. Brad Holt has collected coins for over thirty years and is a member of the ANA and LSCC.

Wanted to Buy. Collector of Liberty Seated Dollars wants engraved and/or counter-stamped (love tokens) or rotated reverses. All mints, any condition, holed

OK. Carl Feldman: carlscoins@gmail.com or (973) 479-9956.

Gerry Fortin Rare Coins. Buying and selling all Seated denominations and actively servicing collector consignments. Varieties are a specialty. Quality, Integrity, and Service throughout any transaction. *The Seated dealer with a collector's perspective!* Visit www.SeatedDimeVarieties.com for GFRC and Liberty Seated Dime web-book. Email:

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www.dickosburn.com We buy, sell, and trade early U.S. silver coinage with an emphasis on Liberty Seated and Bust. Also accepting consignments and want lists. Call Brian at 603-767-7745 or contact Dick and Brian at bpcushing@gmail.com

Larry Briggs Rare Coins. New updated website with many photos—check us out at:

www.larrybriggsrarecoins.com

Seated and Bust Coinage for Sale. Rich Uhrich Rare U. S. Coins Inc. specializes in Bust and Seated silver coins, especially scarce and rare dates and varieties. His website www.richuhrichcoins.com lists his complete inventory. He is an authorized PCGS and NGC dealer and a member of ANA, LSCC, EAC, and JRCS. Contact him at richuhrichcoins@comcast.net, 717-579-8238.

Dr. Eugene Bruder is constantly updating his website, www.typecoins.com, which features a nice selection of bust and seated material for sale. You can reach him at 530-894-0922 or email at: gene@typecoins.com.

Brian Greer, well known dealer, collector, and numismatist, has an extensive listing of many new dates and varieties listed on his website. Check them out at: <http://www.briangreerrarecoins.com/>.

Rotated Reverse Seated Dimes Wanted. I am looking for rotated reverse Liberty Seated dimes. Any interested parties can email Jason Feldman at jason@seated.org

Seated Dime Die Varieties Wanted. I am paying high prices for Seated Dimes with major cuds, die cracks, and rotated reverses. Contact David Thomas at davethomas333@hotmail.com or 1-949-929-2830.



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LSCC Mission

To encourage, promote, and dispense numismatic knowledge of the Liberty Seated coins; to cultivate fraternal relations among its members and all those interested in the science of numismatics.

LSCC Membership Information. Dues remain bargain priced at \$20 per year and include three issues of the *Gobrecht Journal*, an award winning numismatic publication. To join the Liberty Seated Collectors Club, for *Gobrecht Journal*/mailing address changes, or for other membership questions, correspond with the LSCC Secretary.

Articles, comments, or advertisements for publication in the *Gobrecht Journal* may be addressed to the LSCC Publications Editor.

Information, input, comments, or suggestions for improvements to this *E-Gobrecht* are actively solicited from anyone and may be sent to the LSCC Publications Editor.

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Wanted: Material for this newsletter!

Please consider submitting something for print. It need not be elaborate; it can be something as simple as a short note on your favorite variety, neat find, nice cherry pick, happenings at a coin show, rare Liberty Seated coinage coming up for auction, etc. If you are interested in it, rest assured, others will be too! Sharing information is a goal of this newsletter and you need not be an experienced or famous writer to submit something. This is a continuing plea.

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